

2010

May

# V Alaska S Vegetarian Society

## Are “Kid-Friendly” Foods Really Friendly?

by Delisa Renideo

How friendly is it to teach our kids to eat highly processed foods that are high in fat, high in calories, and high in refined sugar and refined flour? These “kid-friendly foods” are creating kids that are increasingly overweight and obese, causing health problems that were previously not seen until adulthood, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Wouldn’t it be friendlier to prepare healthy, tasty, colorful, nutrient-dense, life-supporting foods that would lay the foundation for healthy habits to last a lifetime?



The truth is, kids learn to like the foods they are exposed to at a young age. They like foods they are used to eating. That’s why Chinese kids like Chinese food and American kids like American food. If we introduce healthy, unprocessed plant-based foods to our children at a young age, that’s what they will like. If they see us eating and enjoying these same foods, they will learn that this is what we eat. One of the

***Kids learn to like the foods they are exposed to at a young age.***

main jobs of parents of all species is teaching their offspring what to eat and providing it for them until they can provide it for themselves. Most species do a much better job of it than humans are currently doing, I’m afraid!

You may have seen Jamie Oliver on television lately, working with the “lunch ladies” at an elementary school in Huntington, West Virginia to try to provide healthier food for their kids. Jamie found the kids eating pizza for breakfast and chicken nuggets for lunch, almost every day. The kids like this food, of course! But why? ? ? Because that is what adults have been feeding them and that’s what they’re used to eating.

So what’s wrong with pizza and chicken nuggets? Aren’t they the ultimate “kid-friendly” foods?

If you saw what went into chicken nuggets, you wouldn’t want your kids eating them! They are made from the ground-up see ***Kid-Friendly?*** continued on page 2

## ***Kid-Friendly?*** *continued from the front page:*

parts of the chicken that most people wouldn't consider food, including a hefty load of skin, and mixed with additives, flavorings, emulsifiers, and sometimes parts of cows and pigs. This mixture is then shaped into patties, breaded, and fried. Then it is usually sold frozen and reheated in schools, fast-food restaurants, hospitals, and homes. Not only are the contents of these nuggets disgusting, they contain more fat than the typical fast-food hamburger. At 60 percent fat, and virtually no fiber, these ubiquitous little nuggets are contributing to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Pizza is also a high calorie, high fat food, laden with cheese, cheese, and more cheese. (You've heard of triple-cheese pizza, right?) Add a little high-fat pepperoni to that, and you've got many people's favorite meal.

Of course we still have other "kid-friendly foods"

**According to Dr. Joel Fuhrman, the diet we eat as children has more to do with adult health than the diet we eat later.**

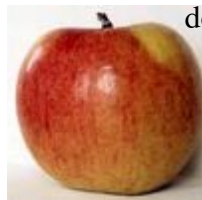
like cookies, ice cream, sodas, chips and French fries. And don't forget the candy. On their birthdays, we stuff our kids and their friends full of foods that will reduce the number of birthdays they will have.

I realize we aren't intentionally giving kids foods to make them sick, but that's exactly what is happening. Then, when we try to improve their diets, we complain that kids don't like the food. That's only

because we got them used to the unhealthy foods first.

So what can we do about this?

First, we need to change our own diets. When we begin eating a healthy, whole-foods, plant-based diet, we'll be leading by example. Secondly, we need to offer these healthy foods to our kids. And



don't assume that if they turn up their noses the first time we offer them that they will never like them. It can take some time for all of us to get

used to new things. If you're lucky enough to be starting with babies and toddlers, you can get them used to fruits and vegetables from the very beginning. But all is not lost if you're starting with older kids.

Sometimes it helps to involve kids in food preparation, especially if you can start with planting your own vegetables or picking them at a u-pick farm. Kids naturally like fruit (which is why candy is often fruit-flavored) so offering a variety of fresh fruits and home-made fruit smoothies will likely be successful very quickly. Raw, bite-sized vegetables are often attractive to kids. They may like to dip them in "cheesy-sauce" or "cheesy-beany spread" (see recipes at [alaskaveg.org](http://alaskaveg.org)). Don't use Ranch Dressing as a dip because it is too high in fat. Avoid getting into power struggles over food, but don't fall into the trap of thinking kids will starve to death if we don't give them what they want. I promise, they won't!

see ***Kid-Friendly?*** *continued on page 3*

# Who to Call



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## Kid-Friendly? *continued from page 2:*

According to Dr. Joel Fuhrman ([www.drfuhrman.com](http://www.drfuhrman.com)), who wrote *Eat to Live*, the diet we eat as children has more to do with adult health than the diet we eat later,

**It helps to involve kids in food preparation...**

so if we really want to be friendly to our kids, let's help lay the foundation for a life free of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. Let's feed them a delicious, nutritious, whole-foods diet based upon fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes.

And let's eat this way with them.



### Mission Statement:

To create a compassionate and sustainable world by inspiring and supporting reverence for all life and the adoption of a plant-based diet.

5010 Lakeside Drive 907-373-1526  
 Wasilla, AK 99654 [www.AlaskaVeg.org](http://www.AlaskaVeg.org)

# Recipe of the Month: "Anything Goes" Hummus

*A favorite from the kitchen of Toni Truesdell*

- 1 can garbanzo beans
- 1 can white beans
- 1/2 cup onions
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 Tbsp. water, as needed
- 1/4 cup Tahini or 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste



Drain and rinse beans and put in food processor with the remaining ingredients. Pulse until creamy.

Now for the "anything goes"! Red peppers can be added to add color and flavor. Pulse separately (but do not puree) green pepper, celery, water chestnuts, olives, etc. to add a crunch to your hummus. Taste as you go, and add more water, lemon juice, salt or other flavoring as desired.

Be creative and use black beans, cumin, salsa, cilantro or whatever. Spread on sandwiches, tortillas or enjoy as a dip.

## We're Having a Picnic!

**Saturday, June 24, 2:00-4:30 p.m.**  
**Matanuska River Park, Palmer**

*It's our first annual AVS Picnic!*  
**Come join in the fun.**

Watch for more info in the June AVS Newsletter.

# Nutrition Nuggets: Is There a Nutritional "Magic Bullet?"

by Delisa Renideo

Is it Acai berries? Or goji berries? Or blueberries? Or kale? Or flax seeds? Which one is the "magic bullet" that will turn our health around and make it possible to leap over tall buildings?

It seems to be part of our Western mind-set to focus on individual parts rather than on the whole, and when we do that with nutrition, we really miss the boat. This reductionistic world-view has led to a reliance on drugs, and to herbs and nutritional components used as drugs. We have "health food stores" that don't have any food in them, but just shelves and shelves of bottles of supposedly "natural" remedies.

Many studies of nutrition suffer the same problem. They isolate a particular food or nutrient to see if ingesting it will prevent cancer, induce weight loss, or reduce baldness. These studies invariably are summarized thusly: "Nope. Eating fruits and vegetables doesn't make you healthier."

In other words, if you're eating the Standard American

***The brightly colored foods generally have higher levels of the antioxidants that strengthen our immune system.***

Diet (SAD), which is now 62% processed foods (primarily white sugar, white flour, and fat) and add a serving of blueberries every day, you're not going to miraculously avoid

cancer, heart disease, obesity, or diabetes. You could substitute Acai berries, goji berries, kale, or flax seeds in this study and the results would be the same. If you make a mi-

***It is the sum total of what you eat on a regular basis that will determine how you look and feel and how long you live.***

nor change in a really bad diet, it is still a bad diet and you

will still suffer health problems from it.

On the other hand, if you change the overall picture of what you eat -- if you eat a diet consisting primarily of unprocessed or lightly processed plants -- you will see tremendous health benefits. There is not one food that is going to make the difference alone. It is the sum total of what you eat on a regular basis that will determine how you look and feel and how long you live.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes all have innumerable health benefits, and the way to maximize the benefits is to eat a variety of them as they work synergistically in our bodies. The brightly colored foods generally have higher levels of the amazing antioxidants that strengthen our immune system and ward off aging. But just adding one or two bright vegetables or fruits to the SAD won't make your body happy. Not even if they are Acai berries, goji berries, or blueberries.



# COMPASSION IN THE KITCHEN

by Faith White

I've been an animal lover my whole life. I spend a lot of time and money rescuing dogs and cats who have been neglected and abused and help them find loving, permanent homes. I've helped everything from horses to fish, and grew up with chickens, fish, cows and pigs. I KNOW they feel fear and pain, sadness and hopelessness.. And I know they feel grateful and trusting when I'm helping them. I can see it in their eyes. At some level, they are well aware of what is going on. I, on the other hand, have only recently become aware of something as obvious as the food on my plate.

Just last November, a friend loaned me [\*Skinny Bitch\*](#), which was a real kick in the pants. It was like a train wreck -- I couldn't look away. The next day, the same friend loaned me the DVD, [\*Food, Inc.\*](#) That was it. I was done, done, done with meat! In spite of my compassion for animals, I had never thought about the fact that by eating them, I was supporting the unbelievable and unnecessary cruelty that is the daily reality of the chickens, pigs, cows, and fish that are raised for our consumption. My eyes were opened and I immediately made the choice to bring my compassion for

animals into the kitchen as well as everywhere else in my life.

My husband, Matt, had been trying to shift our diets away from the Standard American Diet (SAD) for a long time, but I had been reluctant to change what I was used to. He had high cholesterol, plus a family history of heart disease. So when I finally



**I made the choice to bring my compassion for animals into the kitchen as well as everywhere else in my life.**

had my eyes opened about the connection between my diet and animal suffering, he was happy to jump right into vegetarianism with me. He found out about the [Cancer Project Food for Life Cooking Classes](#) and, as a Christmas present, signed us both

up for the classes starting in January. I was a bit apprehensive, but after the first class I never looked back.

Taking the classes and learning how to eat a healthy plant-based diet was a real turning point for us. The door opened, and the information and the inspiration just flowed. By February, Matt's cholesterol had already dropped 48 points! People I saw every day were telling me I looked really good. . . had I lost weight? Did I get a new haircut??? They couldn't put their finger on it, but they could see the change.

see [\*Compassion\*](#), continued on page 7

## There's a fight going on in the school cafeteria.

*Anchorage Daily News, April 4, 2010*

*by Kim Severson*

It's been a tough month for the people who make school lunches.

More than 7 million viewers watched the premiere Friday of "Food Revolution," an ABC reality series in which the British chef [Jamie Oliver](#) storms the kitchens of Huntington, W.Va., to improve the town's collective diet. To the chagrin of cafeteria workers everywhere, Oliver's star villains are the school lunch ladies.

That wasn't the only public thrashing for the people who make school food. Students in Chicago showed up at a Board of Education meeting to protest the quality of their midday meals. And the national news media discovered the blog Fed Up With Lunch, written by an anonymous Midwesterner who is spending a year eating and publishing photos of awful-looking food at her school cafeteria.

Meanwhile, in Washington, a Senate committee on March 24 cut by more than half a proposal by President Barack Obama to spend a record \$10 billion more on child nutrition programs over 10 years, including school food.

Still, people who have been working with the Agriculture Department and Congress to improve school food say the \$4.5 billion increase in the Child Nutrition Act, which comes up for financing every five

years, is a historic improvement. The bill proposes the first real increase over inflation that the school food program has had in several decades.

At least \$40 million would be spent on farm-to-school programs and school gardens. Another \$10 million would go toward adding organic food.

In addition to the increase in financing, a number of less obvious changes in nutritional rules and financing for special programs are intended

to improve school meals as soon as next year. For example, milk is the

biggest single source of saturated fat on the lunch line. The bill would allow only skim milk to be offered.

One of the biggest changes involves food sold in places other than the cafeteria, like vending machines, sporting events and fundraisers. The law would give the Agriculture Department power to set limits on nutrients like sodium and fat in all food sold on campus.

"This is the strongest child nutrition reauthorization bill I have ever seen," said Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, who has worked to improve school nutrition standards for 17 years. "We can't go from candy bars to apples in one fell swoop."



***"This is the strongest child nutrition reauthorization bill I have ever seen."***

***Compassion***, continued from page 5:

So many things have changed for us since we began eating a plant-based diet. For one thing, we enjoy our food a lot more. It has more flavor, more color, and fills us up without making us feel “slugged out.” It has triggered our creativity as we learn to work with new and different combinations of plant-based foods. Our grocery bill has gone way down, and we spend a lot less time in the grocery store. We get a box of organic produce every other week, and mostly just shop the bins at Natural Pantry for other things. Clean-up in the kitchen is also sooooo much easier.

One of the wonderful changes for me is that I have a lighter, happier, kinder attitude towards

everything. I now know it is true that you c a n n o t

**One of the wonderful changes for me is that I have a lighter, happier, kinder attitude towards everything.**

consume something that has endured great suffering, fear, and pain without absorbing some of it yourself. It was such a no-brainer -- I wonder how I missed “getting it” for so long.”

I’ve had 26 years with Matt so far, and now that we are eating this healthy diet, I can see having him in my life for another 50 years! He is an awesome, creative chef and likes to cook, so we share the fun and responsibility of making delicious plant-based meals. (But he’ll NEVER get me to like Brussels sprouts, so he may as well give up!)

As a result of making this change in our diets, I now have one more new pet. Last week, a snail arrived with the parsley in our box of organic produce. I think it will be very happy living with us!

***Food for Life***  
***Nutrition & Cooking Classes***

• **Anchorage** •

***Cancer Prevention or Survival***

**Providence Cancer Center**

Room 2285

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

June 15 - August 3, 2010

***Diabetes Prevention & Reversal***

**Providence Cancer Center**

Room 2285

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

June 17 - August 5, 2010

• **Wasilla** •

***Diabetes Prevention & Reversal***

**Dayspring Enrichment Center**

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

June 16 - August 4, 2010

**Each class meets weekly  
for 7 weeks.**

**Cost: \$90**

**Pre-registration required!**

**To register contact Delisa or  
Charlie at 907-373-1526  
or online at [www.yestolife.info](http://www.yestolife.info)**

For more information:

**[delisa@yestolife.info](mailto:delisa@yestolife.info)**

# Upcoming Events



## Thursday, May 20

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m. If you are interested in attending and learning more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526.

## Friday, May 21

Deadline for articles and information for the June AVS newsletter. Call Elaine at 746-4668, or email to [elaine@alaskaveg.org](mailto:elaine@alaskaveg.org)

## Saturday, May 29

AVS potluck dinner, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. Call 373-1526 for information.

## Week of June 15-17

New series of Food for Life Nutrition & Cooking Classes start. There will be a Cancer Project Class and Diabetes Class in Anchorage and a Diabetes Class in Wasilla. See the box on page 7 or go to [www.yestolife.info](http://www.yestolife.info) to register.

## Saturday, June 26

AVS potluck picnic, 2:00-4:30 p.m., Matanuska River Park, Palmer. First annual AVS Picnic! Come join in the fun. Watch for more in the June AVS Newsletter.

The Alaska Vegetarian Society is under the umbrella of Rays of Hope, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. To join AVS, contact Peggy Robinson at 373-1901, [peggy@alaskaveg.org](mailto:peggy@alaskaveg.org) or join online at [www.alaskaveg.org](http://www.alaskaveg.org)

## Become an AVS Member!

Have you been enjoying the Alaska Vegetarian Society newsletters, either on paper or online? Have you attended some of our monthly potlucks? If so, you've seen that we are providing a lot of support and tools for everyone interested in eating a healthy, plant-based diet for whatever reason -- for our own health, compassion for animals, or for the environment -- or hopefully, all three!

We provide helpful education with our traveling bookstore, programs, and cooking demonstrations at all the potlucks. We help support the Food

**Now you can renew or become a member online.**  
[www.AlaskaVeg.org](http://www.AlaskaVeg.org)

for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes which have helped thousands with the practical changes that make a plant-based diet doable. We offer public showings of selected videos. We table at health fairs. And we have an increasingly extensive website ([www.alaskaveg.org](http://www.alaskaveg.org).)

You can support our work of creating a healthier, more compassionate world by becoming a new member or renewing your membership. We have many levels of membership. Annual Memberships involve a yearly membership donation. In Pledge Memberships, you make monthly donations through-out the year. **All members receive 10% off books and videos and a free subscription to VegNews Magazine, a \$20 value.**

To become a member, renew your membership, or make a donation, visit [www.alaskaveg.org](http://www.alaskaveg.org). Now you can do the entire process online. If you prefer the personal touch, you may call Peggy Robinson, membership coordinator, at 907-373-1901.